

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 2442

To provide for the preparation of a Government report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans during World War II, and a formal acknowledgment of such injustices by the President.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JULY 1, 1999

Mr. LAZIO (for himself, Mr. ENGEL, Mrs. MORELLA, Ms. PELOSI, Mr. BAKER, Mr. BERMAN, Mr. BOEHLERT, Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania, Mr. CAMPBELL, Mr. CROWLEY, Ms. DELAURO, Mr. FORBES, Mr. FOSSELLA, Mr. FRANKS of New Jersey, Mr. GEJDENSON, Mr. GONZALEZ, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. HINCHEY, Mrs. KELLY, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. KING, Mr. LAFALCE, Mr. LAMPSON, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. LOBIONDO, Ms. LOFGREN, Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. McNULTY, Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut, Mrs. MALONEY of New York, Mr. MARTINEZ, Mr. MASCARA, Ms. MCKINNEY, Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California, Mr. NADLER, Mr. OLVER, Mr. OWENS, Mr. PASCRELL, Mr. PALLONE, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. TRAFICANT, Mr. UNDERWOOD, Mr. WU, Mr. FARR of California, Mr. BROWN of California, Mr. WEXLER, Ms. BERKLEY, Mr. NEAL of Massachusetts, Mr. MATSUI, Mr. BLAGOJEVICH, Mr. GILMAN, Mr. WAXMAN, Mr. DOYLE, Mrs. LOWEY, Mr. SMITH of New Jersey, Mr. WEINER, Mr. STUPAK, Mrs. MINK of Hawaii, Mr. DEUTSCH, and Mr. ACKERMAN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

A BILL

To provide for the preparation of a Government report detailing injustices suffered by Italian Americans during World War II, and a formal acknowledgment of such injustices by the President.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Wartime Violation of
5 Italian American Civil Liberties Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 The Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) The freedom of more than 600,000 Italian-
9 born immigrants in the United States and their fam-
10 ilies was restricted during World War II by Govern-
11 ment measures that branded them “enemy aliens”
12 and included carrying identification cards, travel re-
13 strictions, and seizure of personal property.

14 (2) During World War II more than 10,000
15 Italian Americans living on the West Coast were
16 forced to leave their homes and prohibited from en-
17 tering coastal zones. More than 50,000 were sub-
18 jected to curfews.

19 (3) During World War II thousands of Italian
20 American immigrants were arrested, and hundreds
21 were interned in military camps.

22 (4) Hundreds of thousands of Italian Ameri-
23 cans performed exemplary service and thousands
24 sacrificed their lives in defense of the United States.

1 (5) At the time, Italians were the largest for-
2 eign-born group in the United States, and today are
3 the fifth largest immigrant group in the United
4 States, numbering approximately 15 million.

5 (6) The impact of the wartime experience was
6 devastating to Italian American communities in the
7 United States, and its effects are still being felt.

8 (7) A deliberate policy kept these measures
9 from the public during the war. Even 50 years later
10 much information is still classified, the full story re-
11 mains unknown to the public, and it has never been
12 acknowledged in any official capacity by the United
13 States Government.

14 **SEC. 3. REPORT.**

15 The Inspector General of the Department of Justice
16 shall conduct a comprehensive review of the treatment by
17 the United States Government of Italian Americans dur-
18 ing World War II, and not later than one year after the
19 date of enactment of this Act shall submit to the Congress
20 a report that documents the findings of such review. The
21 report shall cover the period between September 1, 1939,
22 and December 31, 1945, and shall include the following:

23 (1) The names of all Italian Americans who
24 were taken into custody in the initial roundup fol-

1 lowing the attack on Pearl Harbor, and prior to the
2 United States declaration of war against Italy.

3 (2) The names of all Italian Americans who
4 were taken into custody.

5 (3) The names of all Italian Americans who
6 were interned and the location where they were in-
7 terned.

8 (4) The names of all Italian Americans who
9 were ordered to move out of designated areas under
10 the United States Army's "Individual Exclusion
11 Program".

12 (5) The names of all Italian Americans who
13 were arrested for curfew, contraband, or other viola-
14 tions under the authority of Executive Order 9066.

15 (6) Documentation of Federal Bureau of Inves-
16 tigation raids on the homes of Italian Americans.

17 (7) A list of ports from which Italian American
18 fishermen were restricted.

19 (8) The names of Italian American fishermen
20 who were prevented from fishing in prohibited zones
21 and therefore unable to pursue their livelihoods.

22 (9) The names of Italian Americans whose
23 boats were confiscated.

1 (10) The names of Italian American railroad
2 workers who were prevented from working in prohib-
3 ited zones.

4 (11) A list of all civil liberties infringements
5 suffered by Italian Americans during World War II,
6 as a result of Executive Order 9066, including in-
7 ternment, hearings without benefit of counsel, illegal
8 searches and seizures, travel restrictions, enemy
9 alien registration requirements, employment restric-
10 tions, confiscation of property, and forced evacuation
11 from homes.

12 (12) An explanation of why some Italian Ameri-
13 cans were subjected to civil liberties infringements,
14 as a result of Executive Order 9066, while other
15 Italian Americans were not.

16 (13) A review of the wartime restrictions on
17 Italian Americans to determine how civil liberties
18 can be better protected during national emergencies.

19 **SEC. 4. SENSE OF THE CONGRESS.**

20 It is the sense of the Congress that—

21 (1) the story of the treatment of Italian Ameri-
22 cans during World War II needs to be told in order
23 to acknowledge that these events happened, to re-
24 member those whose lives were unjustly disrupted
25 and whose freedoms were violated, to help repair the

1 damage to the Italian American community, and to
2 discourage the occurrence of similar injustices and
3 violations of civil liberties in the future;

4 (2) Federal agencies, including the Department
5 of Education and the National Endowment for the
6 Humanities, should support projects such as—

7 (A) conferences, seminars, and lectures to
8 heighten awareness of this unfortunate chapter
9 in our Nation’s history;

10 (B) the refurbishment of and payment of
11 all expenses associated with the traveling ex-
12 hibit “Una Storia Segreta”, exhibited at major
13 cultural and educational institutions throughout
14 the United States; and

15 (C) documentaries to allow this issue to be
16 presented to the American public to raise its
17 awareness;

18 (3) an independent, volunteer advisory com-
19 mittee should be established comprised of represent-
20 atives of Italian American organizations, historians,
21 and other interested individuals to assist in the com-
22 pilation, research, and dissemination of information
23 concerning the treatment of Italian Americans; and

24 (4) after completion of the report required by
25 this Act, financial support should be provided for the

1 education of the American public through the pro-
2 duction of a documentary film suited for public
3 broadcast.

4 **SEC. 5. FORMAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.**

5 The President shall, on behalf of the United States
6 Government, formally acknowledge that these events dur-
7 ing World War II represented a fundamental injustice
8 against Italian Americans.

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